UNDER A CLOUD;

CLEARING HIMSELF.

The Thrilling and Absorbing Story of a Great Crime.

BY JENNIE DAVIS BURTON, AUTHOR OF "HER LIFE'S SECRET," AND

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Presently, a man who was buried in a newspaper at some distance rose, stretched hirtself, and approached

He did not look at Childer, but paused with his back to him, and began humming a p pular air. "Clipper!" he said, suddenly, over his shoulders. It was the signal for which Lyman had

been walting, yet he started visibly, while the gloom on his face deepened.
"Ay, ay!" he returned. "You take your own time to make yourself known after call-

ing me here." "I wanted to get the cut of your jib. A man has to be keerful who he 'sociates with in a place like this."

The fellow leared insciently as he said it. He had turned by this time and taken the empty seat at the table, helping ideaself to the wands that had been placed there without being asked.

"If you've no idea of fillin an empty ca-pacity, I will," he remarked, compinently. "Folks as comes here giverally eats." "Will you be kind enough to come at once to your business with me?"
"Ail in good time, boss. Pleasure first,

business afterwards. Which bein' the case, mebbe you kin tell me how the gentleman is as was waylaid t'other night!" A sudden gleam shot through the gloom of Lyman Childer's countenance

"It doesn't say much for you if that is the best you can do," he answered, coolly. "The friend you inquire for will soon be able to call on you, and will, I have no doubt. You should have made a better job of it."

"'Twasn't me made that try, boss. Ketch this kid nappin', will yer! But say! fer a nickel I could tell you the two as did—who'd do it over again, 'thout a mistake, if they had a leetle coaxin'."

CHAPTER X

AN UNEASY CONSCIENCE.
A faint smile dawned on the lip of Lyman
Childer. He looked straight back into his companion's eyes without speaking. It was the latter who began to twist and redden uncomfortably.

"You're a regular gimblet, to go through a body," he complained. "Why don't you say somethin't I don't like folks as takes it all out in thinkin'."

"Shali I repeat your own elegant remark of eatch this kid mapping? My friend, you did not send the message which brought me to this hole simply to make that proposition to me. Keep yourself to the business which it will be 'greatly to my advantage to heer," the last quoted a trille scornfully from an ill-written and ill-spelled message which had been placed in his hands that

"Hush!" warned the other, with a glance around. "Don't you call names about the place here. There's no tellin' who might hear it. You ain't got no word about that missin' package o' your'n, I reckon!' "I have not."

"Well, it's that I sent 'to see you about. I've got onto the track of the cove what corralled it. If you here me for the job, I'll run him inter the ditch-I'll corner him so tight that lies can't save him."

"Another detective in the field, ch?" still with that slight, mocking smile playing up-on his countenance. "It is upon the principle of 'set a thief to catch a thief' that you

offer yourself, I suppose!"
"Look you, boss," said the man, impressively: "if you wor'n't with me you couldn't say things like that here and get off scott free. Fur your own good, be a leetle quiet-

er. An' now what do you say?"
"When I have any anxiety about that package, I will let you know, Mr.-What shall I call you?"
"Tom Riddle is my name. Red Tom is

a good enough handle for me."
"Well, then, Red Tom, I respectfully inform you that I have no need of your serv-ices. The regular detectives employed are

good enough for me."
"They're a thousand miles off from the truth an' goin' furder. You'll never get them'ere goods back through the detectives,

sir, unless somebody blows the scheme that Lyman looked at him inquiringly as if he expected him to say something more, but as nothing more came, he answered, quiet-

ly.
"You should offer your services to the

express company; they might have need of them, I have not. If that is the end and aim of your desire to see me, we may us well close our interview now." Red Tom leaned toward him and dropped

his voice even lower in its assured and confidential tone. "Mebby you'd rather hire me not to track the papers an' the thiof, boss. I'm as open

to that sort of business as fother. Think it over for a minit afore you say no." There was a change in Lyman Childer's face, try as he would to keep it impassive.

"What do you mean?" he asked, sharply. "Jest this: I've heerd that you've come into a fortune, boss. Now, s'posen them 'ere papers was meant to keep it away from you, s'pose it 'ud be a sight better fur you if they never got to you—it 'ud be worth while payin' a feller to let the business while payin a felier to let the distinct alone, wouldn't it? Kind of a fortunit thing, that 'ere robbery, in sich a case. S'posen again that the feller who goff them papers was all-fired mad when he found I am not drilled in the ways of seciety, as ant they was - thought he was makin' a big haul and found himself left. Negrally, he wants to know how to turn the thing to the best account, an' we'll s'pose, furder,



"MEDBY YOU'D RUTHER HEV ME NOT TO TRACK THE THIEF, BOSS! w'at kin be did about it. That 'ud explain

stands now."

The color came and went in Lyman's

face, there was a livid line about his mouth, "I don't know how you came into your knowledge of my affairs," he said. "It certainly make a fight for it if such papers . came up, but I don't believe in them. Tell me plainly what you are after—to palm off something of that sort on me for a consid-

never want to s e any thing of 'em. you know. Tain't needful that you should believe in 'em. My friend's in no great hurry, an' you kin take your own time to think what you'd like to do fur him, but I'm out o' work jest now, an' I'd kind o' like to consider myself under hire to you."
"Were you speaking for your triend or

yourself when you made me your first offer | can he."

us 'ud be good fur a job o' that kind. Tell ingly at Childer in an effort to read his you, bose, it 'll be worth your while to take me up. You kin give me a retainin' fee-not here, I'll go outside with you. Then, if you wants me, you have only to send a let- could detect reluctance and dislike, though ter in care of Mike Maloney, at this 'ere

"You don't suppose I have much money about me on a trip of this kind, do you? Here is a ten-dollar bill—you are welcome to it. You shall hear from me if I ever

have need of you."
"All right, boss. When kin I have your answer for my friend!"
"When I see you again. Tell your friend not to build very high. I may not care to make terms with him."

There was a visitor awaiting Mr. Childen when he reached his home at a somewhat later hour-a visitor whom Carol had been entertaining, though she did not like the

"Hello, Childer; you take your time to getting around after business is over, it strikes me. Miss Carol teils me you have been playing the Good Samaritan, waiting on the sick. New role for you, isn't it! Looks as if it hadn' agreed with you. either.

"I had a long walk after leaving Carolbusiness. Is dinner waiting, sis?" Cars! slipped away to see, hoping their guest would not stay, but he did. He and Lyman appeared in the dining-room, chat-

ting sociably. The latter had got rid of his annoyance at first seeing Ingot, and excrted himself to be the agreeable host. They went into Lyman's room to enjoy a eigar when the meal was over.
"Cozy little crib," remarked Ingot. "You

have things free! and easy here, but I sup-pose you'll be changing your style of living now, and go for the high-and-mighty, more in the Everleigh style." "I shall not make any change, for a time,

"Well. I think that's the sensible plan. 'There's many a slip,' and dead folks are sometimes as contrary as living ones— found to have changed their minds at the last minute. Your affairs are settled past any chance for that, aren't they? By the way, was it this relative of yours who so lately shuffled off the mortal coil who left a clear quarter of a million to his native State out of regard for the laws which had pro-tected him and his property for sixty odd

years!""
"The same. But his lawyer advises us to be satisfied with what we have received rather than to contest the will." "Hem! He gets a slice under it, I sup-

ose. But it's better than being left out alogether. No chance for the Everleigh in that case, ch?"
"I don't know that there is a chance as

it is."
The moodiness which had been banished from Lyman's brow clouded it again. He was thinking of that afternoon visit to the wounded ex-messenger, and of Miss Everleigh's undisguised interest in the latter. Ingot seemed to divine his thoughts.

Oh, you're safe enough if you don't let Bergman cut you out. By the way, it's lucky for you I took a notion to your sister Carol instead of the charming Althea. Without being vain, I may say that I could block your little game there if I wished. It

was there any thing hidden under the words to make Lyman Childer study him furtively and uneasity! The book-keeper was apparently unconscious of his scru-"If I did not know I had burned Farra-

ker's letter to the last scrap, I should fear he had an inkling of that matter," thought Lyman. "I wouldn't like him to get a hold on me."

CHAPTER XL

A few days later Carol had a note from Miss Everleigh, asking her to make the latter a week's visit.

"Tell your brother I am not selfish enough to take you away without expecting him to spend the evenings with us," ran one clause of the missive, and Carol smiled knowingly to herself, thinking that this would make Lyman's consent certain, but much to her dismay, Lyman seemed to regard the plan unfavorably.

"We must not presume too much upon her goodness," he said. "I think, Carol, we had

better keep to our own quiet life "
"Now, brother Lyman, you don't think any thing of the kind. At least I don't. What would be the use of good fortune coming to us if we were not to take the pleas-

ure of it! It would disappoint you as much as me not to go, and you know it." "Would it disappoint, you, Carol?" asked

Lyman, almost wistfully. "Well, in that case go. Ill see as to myself." Carol was greeted most warmly by Miss Everleigh, and kept for a half-hour's chat in the room which was to be hers during her stay. Then they went down to the drawing-room, but Althea turned back at

"Go in," she said. "You will find a friend of yours there. Excuse me a moment, please. I must lay out papa's dressing-gown and slippers. I really had no idea it was so late."

So Carol entered alone, and a young man who rose rather listlessly out of a deep lounging chair, flushed suddenly radiant in

the genuiness of his surprise. "So, you are the expected visitor!" he exclaimed. "How delightful! Do you know, you probably know, and am very easily put

out of countenance. You don't know what a relief—what a pleasure this is."
"I can imagine," laughed Carol, mentally deciding that he was handsomer for the state of invalidism he had passed through. He told her that he had been gaining every day, and only submitted to Althea's de-mands upon him because he had nothing definite in view-not that he felt the need

of further rest. Still, it was proved that he was not averse to petting, and the two girls vied in making the time pass pleasantly for him. Mr. Rverleigh was well pleased at having the young man there; Norris caught his eyes on him now and then, with a speculative look in them, and the young man found himself blushing as he tried to decide what

"If it were not too presumptuous to sup-pose, I should say he thinks I am making love to Althea and is not averse to it; but then he would not be unkind to a coalheaver if she were to fancy him. Now, I know she is only kind to me as a sister is to a brother, but—but—I wish she did not

w it quite so much at all times." This thought came when Carol began to draw away from them in the evenings. Norris thought he read a suspicion of something which did not please her in her looks; and, in truth, Carol was disappointed that w'at kin be did about it. That 'ud explain Miss Everleigh manifested no great interest any thing you want to know, wouldn't it! in her brother as the days went by. Ly-We'll say that that's the way the thing man had not availed himself of his invitation, and when Carol made inquiries, Mr. Everleigh reported him steeped in business, taking more on his shoulders than there was any need, in fact, yet it was evident that the senior partner was pleased at the enterprise of his young associate.

enterprise of his young associate.

However, toward the end of the week he would be no use to ask you. If you hold the papers you speak of they may have told you something, but I refuse to believe Norris there, he did not show it. The inthey could possibly do what you intimate- evitable business was not out of his mind

throw me out of the fortune. I should yet, apparently, for he and Mr. Everleigh retired to the study, and Norris was summoned to join them after the first haif-hour.
"I've been turning over an idea all week,

and now that Childer is here, it is time to "Now, boss, as a man of honor, you'd help. You, Lyman, have just been showing me how we can extend our connections, but now. "Tain't needful that you should believe an iron man could not stand the work you are laying out for yourself. Now, here is Norris with nothing to do, and he is a lad I can trust. Why should we not take him in, give him a clerkship first, with the promise of advancing him to the cashier's piace! I am sure we can't do better, nor, I think,

on Bergman's account?"

"There can be no doubt about the last."

Red Tom gringed. "I reckon either of said Norris, gratefully, then looked search-

The younger partner had a set smile on his face, but beneath it Norris fancied he what he said was mildly in favor of the

of course will be satisfactory to me. In view of the future it will be well enough;



still there is no hurry. Bergman will hardly be in working trim before the first of the

"I feel well enough now, so far as that is concerned; but if I decide to accept your kind offer, I should prefer starting in at that time. I must pay Uncle Amos a visit neanwhile. He will not regard your offer as gratefully as I do, my dear sir, old friends

though you are."
"No. I forgot to mention that he called on me to-day. The new bee in his bonuet is making a great buzz. He wants to go into the detective business now himself: says he would not interfere with your case so came to me for employment. He wanted the details of my loss of a year ago, and thought that something might be saved to me yet. By the way, the police have con-firmation of the rumor that Edson is dead-The fellow was a rascal, and all but ruined me, yet I can't help feeling sorry for him. I've always believed there was a bolder villain back of him. I don't think it was in him to concect and carry out that scheme alone. If you want work in the line that your uncle has laid down, Norris, there is that mystery for you to unravel. I dare say, if the truth ever comes to light, we will find that Edson benefited little by the money he took. I would give something to have the affair cleared up, if only to settle the morbid doubts that come to me sometimes. Being cheated once, I must go to fancying that I am at the mercy of thieves and traitors—another reason why I shall be glad to take you in, Norris. Supported by two such stout pillers as you and Lyman I hope to get back my faith in human kind. Well, well; your Uncle Amos has his little eccentricities, but a kinder heart—an honester soul—God never put in a man's body. But come, now that every thing is settled, let us join the ladies. They will think we have deserted them." Taking it for granted that every thing was

settled, he led the way out. It was not through any intention that Norris Bergman's eyes were fixed upon Childer during the greater part of this speech. Some change of expression caught his sight first-a creeping pallor mounting under the dark skin and changing it to a dull, leaden hue, then a look that was flashed at him of defiance, resistance, fear - Norris scarcely

ly into his lip, and brought back the color to his face by sheer force of will.

A cold shock ran over the nerves of the observer. His own eyes sank. A horrible suspicion went over him that Lyman Childer was the deeper villain behind the ab sconding cashier. The idea came and was dismissed in a moment, yet having been

there it would come again.

Carol looked up at him invitingly as they entered the parlor, and taking the seat by her side, he soon forgot the unpleasant inpression the interview had given him. He felt that he could not entertain a doubt of any one near and dear to her, all the more that Lyman failed to send any scowling look

in their direction. It was a perfect evening. Mr. Everleigh dozed in his chair, and the young people were left to their own devices. The clock striking eleven brought Lyman to his fost, and his sister followed him into the hall to help him on with his overcoat, and to see that his muffler was closely wrapped about his throat.

"For I can't have you taking cold while I am away, Lyman. Now, aren't you repaid for letting me come?"

"Teil me one thing, Carol, was it to you, er Miss Everleigh, he was making love to from the first!

"I-1 don't think it was to Althea," mur-mured Carol, with the red chasing into her cheeks, and Lyman faced the wintry night with a warmth about his heart which no wind could chill.

He had not gone a dozen yards when footsteps came up behind him, and a hand was laid roughly upon his arm. "I've just got wind of what's up. Did you think you could go ahead with such business without ever taking me into consideration. I thought I gave you a pretty strong inking of what I wanted, and you agreed to it. Now, by gum! we'll get it into plain

words, and see how far I can depend on "I think you are exciting yourself very needlessly, Ingot," returned Lyman, con-temptuously. "At any rate, don't raise a row on the street. Come to your plain words; I am willing to hear them, though I don't recognize your right to take me to task in this manner, no matter what you

may mean."

The other restrained himself with an effort, and went on more quietly: "You know very well what my idea is regarding your sister Carol. She's the daisy for me, and I won't have any one interfer-ing with my chances. I dropped you a hint that I didn't want Bergman hanging around that I didn't want Bergman hanging around your house, and you as good as told me that you would do any thing but encourage him. I was fool enough to believe you, and now it seems that you find an easy way to get out of breaking your word. You don't encourage him, but you send her into the house where he is staying and keep your back turned till the mischief is done. Now, I tell you. I won't not up with any such tell you, I won't put up with any such

"I might ask, how are you going to help yourself, but there's no use quarreling where we don't really disagree. I give you my word. I did not know Bergman was there until to-night. If I had, I should have Collars, Fine Shirts and thought twice about letting her go." Ingot was only half appeared by this ex

"I might believe that if it didn't smooth the way for you—give you an excuse to go as often as you like; you avouldn't care how much my fat is in the fire so your steak is all right; but I tell you, it's to be share and share alike with us. If I get Carol, you may have the fair Althea; if I miss her, I'll spoil

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

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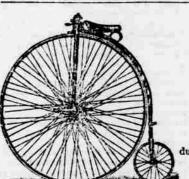
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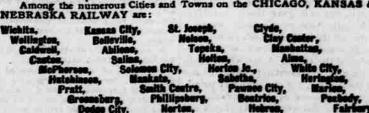
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